a piece of waste land and cleared it for cultivation was the owner of that land. The Mahomedan rulers of India had also recognised the force of that theory in practice. But, it was probably too late in the day to go back to the days of Manu. The Member's second contention was that the existing Puduval Rules were extremely faulty. He referred to the Pattom Proclamation of 1040 and doubted whether under it aliens could acquire rights of permanent occupancy in Government lands and observed that anything more than *Pandarapattom* tenure should not be created under the rules. He also suggested that the rules should be put into a legislative enactment clearly indicating the policy underlying the same. In conclusion, the Member pleaded for open public enquiries being held in the matter of registration of *puduvals* and put in a strong plea for prompt completion of such enquiries and for practical effect being given to the rule granting preferential rights to natives over foreigners whenever lands were registered.

Mr. P. A. Abraham B. A., B. L. (Member, Kottayam taluk) complained of *puduval* grievances and of the manner in which waste lands were being registered in such taluks as Muvattupuzha, Thodupuzha and Kunnatnad. His chief point was that the people were not being given access to the records connected with *puduval* enquiries. The newspapers were full of complaints and alleged abuse of powers by the Revenue officers. The appointment of a Committee to go into such matters was suggested. The launching of several companies for bringing land under some kind of cultivation or other was a sign of the awakening of the people to a growing demand for land. Another matter dealt with by the Member was the long delay in the disposal of *puduval* applications. The intention of Government to have marshy lands suitable for paddy cultivation in the Forest Reserves excised and thrown open for registry was not being carried out because of the opposition of the Forest Officers. *Inter alia* the Member observed that, in view of the good pioneering work done by the European planters, he was in favour of giving waste lands to them. The fixing of *tharavila* was, he said, being arbitrarily done and was a fruitful source of hardship to the ryot. In northern taluks what was done was to sub-divide lands in such a way as to bring their disposal under the jurisdiction of the local Revenue officials. Sometimes unfair competition was engendered with motives not altogether just or commendable. The practice of auctioning waste lands and giving them to the highest bidder was not consistent with the declared land policy of Government which was to promote the ryots' good. Finally, the Member said that prohibitory assessment was being realised without any information being given to the party concerned, the fact being known only when steps were taken to realise the amount. Such a procedure landed the State also in pecuniary loss, besides involving it in litigation.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

10. Grant of additional lands for extension of estates.

Mr. R. Ross (Member, South Travancore Planters' Association) said that firewood in some estates was getting extremely scarce and was a necessity for both tea and rubber. In the Ponmudi District most of the estates had been under cultivation for the last 50 years and fuel had been almost exhausted. The forest land applied for was in many cases both unworkable and useless in so far as the Forest Department was concerned. He requested that such lands wanted by Planters might be granted on reasonable terms for fuel purposes as well as for extensions in tea and other products.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

11. Reduction of *tharavila* on *puduval* lands in the Devicolam Division with a view to extend cultivation on the hills.

Mr. C. A. Meera Rowther (Member, Nominated) submitted that the high rate of *tharavila* on *puduval* lands in the Devicolam Division, *viz*, Rs. 25 per acre, was a source of discouragement to people applying for registry of lands in that Division. Consequently, most of the lands which could have been brought under cultivation were allowed to lie waste. The destruction of crops by wild beasts, the unhealthiness of the locality and the heavy cost of cultivation rendered the grant of special

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly